

so. They arrive together, spend a few moments or, if they find fruit, a longer time in one place, and then are off to another, flying in a body with a cheerful twittering noise. Once I saw a small flock feeding and resting in a low tree, where they could be observed at close quarters. While watching me they went through some antics that seemed comical and almost impudent, extending one wing and keeping the other closed, so that I could not help thinking of a boy standing on one leg and extending the other.

27. *PYCNONOTUS GABONENSIS* (Ibis, 1904, p. 638).

The "Nkwe'ele" is the commonest bird of the cleared land, or, at any rate, that most frequently seen and heard, for it is bold and continually utters its cheerful little call or song. It sings most heartily in rainy weather. It is a versatile bird, being able to circle round and snap up insects on the wing like a Flycatcher, as well as to cling by its claws to the bark of a perpendicular tree-trunk like a Woodpecker.

Nests of the Nkwe'ele are often found placed on plantains, bushes, or small trees. The fabric is shallow and cup-shaped, made of dry leaves as a base, with fine root-fibres or grass-stems for the interior, and is not lined.

VI.—*Remarks on Motacilla subpersonata Meade-Waldo.*

By ERNST HARTERT, Ph.D.

NEARLY everywhere in the Palearctic Region a form of black-and-white Wagtail is met with. It is therefore not very strange that one should be found breeding in Northern Africa. Until recently this had not been ascertained to be the case, as we only knew of *Motacilla alba alba* and *Motacilla alba lugubris* being winter-visitants there. But recently Mr. Meade-Waldo has discovered a very interesting and peculiar race of this group breeding in Western Morocco, on the Oum Rbialh or Waad Moorbey. It is true that years ago Dr. Sharpe bought from Mr. Boucard a specimen of a Wagtail said to have been received from Morocco, which is now in the British Museum. This example must, however,

have been erroneously stated to come from Morocco, as it is a specimen of *Motacilla personata*, under which name it was entered in the 'Catalogue of Birds' (x. p. 481), although the correctness of the locality was doubted by Dr. Sharpe.

Mr. Meade-Waldo, when describing his new Wagtail, compared it with *M. personata* from Turkestan and called it *Motacilla subpersonata* (Bull. B. O. C. xii. p. 27, November 1901). In the 'Ibis,' 1903, p. 208, he again compared his new form with *M. personata*, figuring its head side by side with the head of *M. alba*, which, however, was called *M. personata* by mistake.

In my opinion, it would have been better to have compared *M. subpersonata* with *M. alba* than with *M. personata*. With the latter it only agrees in having more black on the head than *M. alba*, but the black is very differently distributed. From *M. personata* it differs, moreover, in the coloration of the wing-coverts, which are narrowly margined with greyish white, instead of being so widely bordered with white as to cover the dark bases, and also in the lesser size and lesser extent of the black on the nape. With *M. alba* the Moroccan Wagtail agrees in every way except in the coloration of the sides of the head. There is a narrow black line from the base of the bill to the eye and another, sometimes irregular and ill-defined, from the base of the bill under the ear-coverts to the sides of the neck. Besides, the black of the throat runs up in a wide band on the sides of the head, where it is connected by a black line with the black of the nape. It is thus certain that *M. subpersonata* is only the Moroccan representative of *M. alba*, to which it is more closely allied than to *M. personata*.

On the other hand, *M. subpersonata* might as well be compared with one as the other, for my studies have led me to the conclusion that all the black-and-white Wagtails are geographical representatives (subspecies) of one species, which, of course, must bear the oldest name *Motacilla alba*. Thus *M. subpersonata* will stand in my forthcoming number of 'Palæartic Birds' as *M. alba subpersonata*, and *M. personata* as *M. alba personata*.

Text-fig. 9.

Head of *Motacilla alba alba*. ♂ ad. (spring).

Text-fig. 10.

Head of *M. alba subpersonata*, ♂ ad. (spring).

Text-fig. 11.

Head of *M. alba personata*, ♂ ad. (spring).

Mr. F. W. Riggenbach has lately sent to the Tring Museum six adult males, one adult female, and two young birds in first plumage of this Wagtail, all from the banks of the Oum Rbiah or Waad Moorbey, from the Mhoiwla, a day's march from Mazagan, to Rahamma. The female differs from the male in being smaller (wing 5 mm. shorter), and in having the crown of the head dark grey with black spots and a black patch in front, just above the white forehead, while the upper throat is mixed with white. The young are like those of *M. alba alba*, but have darker ear-coverts.

The accompanying text-figures represent the heads of a fully adult male of *M. alba subpersonata*, from one of Mr. Riggenbach's specimens (text-fig. 10), and corresponding heads of *M. alba alba* (text-fig. 9) and *M. alba personata* (text-fig. 11).

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VII.—*Notes on the East-African Species of Macronyx and Tmetothylacus.* By F. J. JACKSON, C.B., C.M.G.

(Plate III.)

I TRUST that the accompanying notes on the three species of *Macronyx*, one of which is new to science, and also on their near ally, the remarkable *Tmetothylacus tenellus* of Cabanis, found in British East Africa, may prove of interest to readers of the 'Ibis.'

Of the species of *Macronyx*, the largest and at the same time the commonest is *M. croceus*. This fine and conspicuous bird occurs along the coast from Witu to Mombasa and throughout the two Protectorates westward to Uganda. It is particularly plentiful in the Naudi country, at an altitude of 6500 feet, and again at the Eldoma Ravine and on the eastern foot-hills of Mau. It frequents open grass-country interspersed with short scrub and acacia-trees, and is almost invariably found in pairs all the year round. It is very tame and confiding, and is easily approached. It has a short pleasing song, which it warbles forth on the wing, or while